

THE MYSTERIOUS COLLECTION OF FR KONSTANTINAS KUPRYS-KUPREVIČIUS

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Abstract

We have little information about the priest and collector Konstantinas Kuprys-Kuprevičius (1874–1947) and his mysterious collection. He became known in cultural circles only when the State Archaeological Commission and the media mentioned him in 1935, because he acquired the archaeological collection of Fr Juozapas Žiogas (1868–1935) under unclear circumstances.* Before his death, Fr Žiogas left his collection in his will to Kaunas' Vytautas the Great Museum of Culture. On 27 December 1935, Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius showed his acquired collection of antiquities, along with his own pieces, in an exhibition at St Anthony's Missionary College. After that, and until the death of Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius, Lithuanian archaeologists and museum staff unsuccessfully attempted to take over or to repurchase the Žiogas collection. It is therefore not surprising that there was a negative opinion about Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius in Lithuanian archaeological historiography. This article will try to illuminate the story of his life, his philanthropic activities, his passionate love of antiquities and archaeological artefacts, and his collection, which is sometimes referred to as his 'museum'. However, due to a lack of archive data, and the mysterious disappearance of the Žiogas collection, some questions still remain.

Key words: Konstantinas Kuprys-Kuprevičius, priest, collector, collection.

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The life

We do not know much about Konstantinas Kuprys-Kuprevičius as a person and a collector, and the existing information is imprecise or contradictory, and even not true (Samavičius 1994, p.4; Kiškis 1996, p.72; Ramanauskaitė 1999; Kulikauskas, Zabiela 1999, p.146). Based on the scarce data available, there is no information about him in the historical database of 'Lithuanian Catholic Clergy in the 16th to the 21st Centuries'.¹ The webpage of the Lithuanian Archaeological Society (LAD) states that he was born in 1877, but the date of his death and his place of burial are unknown.² When we talk about him as a collector, it is important to stress the locations in his ministry, because many of the archaeological and ethnographic finds in his collection originated there. The LAD website refers to Duokiškis (Rokiškis district), where he served as a priest, and Pūsė (Molėtai district), where he was parish priest. The same information can be found on the webpage of the Lithuanian Integral Museum In-

formation System.³ More accurate biographical data is revealed in a letter to doctor Jonas Lelis (1914–2011), signed by J.P. Gedgaudas, a monsignor of the Telšiai Diocese, who wrote several valuable volumes of memoirs about prewar and postwar Lithuania, including recollections about people who knew the priest (Lelis 1999, pp.31–41; 2003, pp.67–84; 2012, p.101ff.). Some of the personal papers of Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius in the Aušra Museum (ŠAM) in Šiauliai, and a few documents held by the Telšiai Diocese Curia, are the best sources about his ordination and his pastoral achievements (Archive of Telšiai Diocese Curia; ŠAM, GEK 1226). The circumstances regarding the acquisition of the Žiogas collection are best reflected by the documents in the Manuscript Department in the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, and also in the Cultural Heritage Centre archives of the Department of the Cultural Heritage and Scientific Archive of Kretinga Museum (MM R, fund 57; KPA, fund 17; KM MA).

Konstantinas Kuprys-Kuprevičius may have been born on 26 January 1874. In documents written in Russian, his name is given in the form 'K. Kuprevičius', and

¹ Lietuvos katalikų dvasininkai XVI–XXI amžiuje. Istorinė biogramų duomenų bazė (online). Available from: <http://www.lkma.lt/lddb/index.php> (accessed 16 March 2015).

² Konstantinas Kuprys (Kuprevičius) (online). Available from: http://www.lad.lt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&Itemid=103&id=863 (accessed 22 April 2015).

³ Lietuvos integrali muziejų informacinė sistema (online). Available from: <http://www.limis.lt/asmenys/-/personFastSearch/view/150000024420812> (accessed 16 March 2015).

* V. Ramanauskaitė (V. Ostašenkoviėnė) discusses Fr Juozapas Žiogas' collection, and how it was sold to Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius, in her article 'Archeologas kunigas Juozapas Žiogas' (1999) and in this volume of *Archaeologia Baltica*. Therefore, the authors of this article do not discuss the circumstances of the acquisition of Fr Žiogas' collection.

later he used his priest's name Kuprys or Kuprys-Kuprevičius.⁴ Why the form of his surname varies is unknown. At the moment, we do not know his place of birth, or where he acquired his academic qualification to enter the seminary in Kaunas. The members of his family are also unclear, but data provided by doctor Lelis shows that Kuprys-Kuprevičius had a brother who was a priest (the name is not indicated), and a sister who married a rich farmer called Žilinskas and lived in the village of Januškonys (Baisogala parish, Radviliškis district) (Lelis 2003, p.77ff.). His sister's daughter Jadvyga Žilinskaitė (born in 1885) helped him to take care of the home farm.

On 22 September (October 5) 1901, Kuprys-Kuprevičius graduated from the Kaunas seminary (the Žemaičiai Diocesan Seminary, as recorded in the graduation document; ŠAM GEK 1226). Besides the document mentioned, on one of his visiting cards it is written by hand 'January [...] 1904' (ŠAM GEK 133113, I-R 12489). However, according to the latest edition of *Elenchus omnium ... et universitatis cleri provinciae Ecclesiasticae Lituaniae pro anno Domini*, he was ordained as a priest only in 1910; perhaps it is just a mistake (*Elenchus omnium* 1940, pp.153, 258). It might be a mistake, because other documents about his appointments indicate that in 1901–1902 he was appointed as priest at Vainutas (Šilutė district), and then after six months he was transferred to Deltuva (1902), and later that year to Kuršėnai (1902–1904). His subsequent appointments (Salakas, Zarasai 1904–1905; Plungė 1905; Skapiškis, Kupiškis district 1907–1907; Seredžius, Jurbarkas 1907–1907) did not last long. During the First World War, according to the official Samogitian Diocesan annual publication, he was based in Duokiškis (Kamajai parish in the Rokiškis district) (*Elenchus omnium* 1912, p.18; *Elenchus omnium* 1918, p.11). While serving as a priest in Duokiškis, he faced Bolshevik (later communist) agitation. The Kamajai revolutionary committee demanded a contribution of 5,000 roubles from him (ŠAM, GEK 1226). After unrest in 1920–1922, he became curate of Šventybrastis church in the parish of Apytalaukis in the Kėdainiai district. We know this from the description by Czesław Miłosz (1911–2004) of his home parish (Kamuntavičienė 2006, pp.241–258). In a document held in the archives of the Kaunas Archdiocese, Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius expressed the opinion that 'It was very difficult to work there' (Kamuntavičienė 2006, p.248ff.). From 1899 to 1904, a certain Fr Pranciškus Kuprevičius served in Šventybrastis church, who could

possibly have been Kuprys-Kuprevičius' brother, or just a namesake. In 1922, the Bishop of Samogitia Pranciškus Karevičius (1861–1945) made an order to transfer Kuprys-Kuprevičius from Šventybrastis to Vaičičiai in the Alsėdžiai deanery, in the Skuodas district. He worked there until 1927. Between 1927 and 1930, he accepted a new appointment, at Pašilė church, in the Kaitinėnai deanery (now the Kelmė district) (ŠAM, GEK 1226, official appointment rescript of 1927.04.12 No 1623, signed by the Bishop of Telšiai Justinas Staugaitis [1866–1843]). At the end of 1930, he was relieved from his duties in Pašilė, and moved to Pūsnė in the Giedraičiai deanery (Ukmergė district), in the Diocese of Kaišiadorys (ŠAM, GEK 1226, official rescripts of 1930, Nos 2667, 2722). In 1932, Kuprys-Kuprevičius returned to the Diocese of Telšiai, and received a two-year position as Budriai church administrator in the Palanga deanery (Kretinga district) (ŠAM, GEK 1226, official rescripts of 1932 and 1934, Nos 755, 1242). On 20 June 1934, the Bishop of Telšiai issued order No 1670: 'Kuprys-Kuprevičius, due to illness ... is exempt from any obligations, but with the right to reside in the Franciscan monastery in Kretinga, as emeritus, committed to help ... the church and parish' (ŠAM, GEK 1226, letter written in 1936 by the priest to the Tax Inspectorate in Kaunas). In 1939, he was still in Kretinga, but between 1940 and 1944, doctor Lelis communicated with him in the town of Akmenė (Lelis 1998, p.40). In 1947, he was appointed to the parish of Žukančiai (Joniškis). He died on 3 March 1947 in the Franciscan monastery in Kaunas (6 Uosto St), and was buried in Aleksotas parish cemetery (Kaunas AK, 1947).

Official documents do not give the reasons for the frequent change in his appointments. It is possible that promoting the Lithuanian identity and Catholicism during Imperial Russian times could have had an impact on the frequent changes of parish. Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius' forthright nature and his unusual deeds (such as baptising the children of single mothers) could have led to a conflict with the Church hierarchy. But in the memoirs of his contemporaries, he emerges as a noble person, full of Christian compassion and kindness (Lelis 1998, p.34ff.).

Personality

We know very little about the social activities of Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius as a public figure. Like other priests assigned to parishes in Lithuania during Imperial Russian times, he was obliged to teach religion in schools (ŠAM, GEK 1226, official rescripts of 1901–1902). However, while conducting religious instruction, he crossed the limits allowed by the government,

⁴ For convenience, this article uses the name Kuprys-Kuprevičius, although various documents use different forms: Kupris, Kuprevičius (Kuprewicz) (ŠAM GEK 133113, I-R 12487–12489).

and was targeted for spreading the Catholic faith among schoolchildren too eagerly. Furthermore, he tried to nurture the Lithuanian language and identity. That is how, in around 1907, 'using lots of his own money', he opened a bookshop in Skapiškis (s.n. 1910, p.91).

As the head of a parish, he could afford to support the gifted children of his close relatives by paying for their studies in Imperial Russia (Lelis 2003, p.68, 80ff.).⁵ In 1934, he set up a fund of 20,000 litas, from which the interest helped to cover the education of two relatives at St Anthony's College in Kretinga, established by the Franciscan Order (ŠAM, GEK 1226, official rescript of 1934, signed by the priest and Provincial, T. Kazimieras Čepulis OFM [1884–1962]). He made donations to Catholic institutions: to Telšiai Diocesan Seminary (1,000 litas)⁶ and the Teacher Training College of the Sacred Heart Congregation in Kaunas (1,000 litas). Even during the difficult times of the German occupation, he gave cash and food to support the Franciscan monastery in Kretinga (ŠAM, GEK 1226, acknowledgment letters).

After the occupation of Lithuania in 1940, the parish of Akmenė became a refuge for 'enemies of the Soviets', or members of their families (Lelis 1998, p.36ff.; 2012, p.103). During the first days of the Second World War, the priest was inspired, and inspired others, to save several teenagers from being shot, for belonging to the Komsomol (the youth division of the Communist Party) and for collaborating with the new regime (Lelis 1998, p.36ff.). In 1940, he sent a request to the Soviet government, asking to be allowed to continue his educational support for poor relatives out of savings in a bank account that had been blocked by decision of a court.⁷

The rest of the written requests, payment vouchers and other documents in the Aušra Museum show that the priest had a strong character, a good knowledge of the law, and an ability to use legal arguments to prove his point. In addition, he felt a duty to defend his position in the press regarding his rights to the Žiogas archaeological collection (s.n. 1937, p.7). Despite the prevailing negative opinion in Lithuanian archaeological historiography on the acquisition of the archaeologi-

cal collection of Fr Žiogas (the collection was promised to the Vytautas the Great Culture Museum), the archive data available shows that in 1936 and onwards, the State Archaeological Commission failed to prove that the transaction between the two priests was illegal (MM R, fund 57, p.3ff.; KPA, fund 17, corpus 2, file 18 (1940–1943), pp.1–11).

In view of the scarcity of archival data, we can assume that Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius was a solitary man; he did not talk about his family or the priesthood, even with people he was close to. Nevertheless, he was charismatic. Even in his seventies, he was interested in many things, politics, chess, art and history, and was an avid collector (Lelis 1998, p.32). Although his collection was exhibited after 1936 as part of Lithuanian cultural history, he would gladly show it to anyone who was interested in seeing it, and he would enthusiastically tell stories about individual objects. However, our knowledge today about the artefacts in his collection, especially the archaeological finds, is minimal or slender (MM R, fund 57, corpus, p.3ff.; KPA, fund 17, corpus 2, file 18 (1940–1943), pp.1–11; s.n. 1936b, p.62ff.; s.n. 1936a, 62ff.; s.n. 1944a, p.3; 1944b, p.3; Lelis 1998, p.33).

A collector of antiquities

As a collector, Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius belongs to the generation of passionate collectors that were typical of the late 19th and early 20th century, who were interested in many areas of art, science and culture. Therefore, we should expect to find some interesting stories in the acquisition of the artefacts in his collection. In many cases, facts related to similar artefacts in the collection, their cultural attribution, or their belonging to famous historical personalities, are falsified (for example, Kuprys-Kuprevičius claimed that an ancient ring of yellow metal with the engraved date 1252 belonged to King Mindaugas and his wife Morta) (Lelis 1998, p.34). Considering the scarcity of descriptions of the collection, we should assume that it was the collection of an amateur. His desire to include antiquities from other countries distinguished his collection, in particular the archaeological section, from the collections of his contemporaries such as Fr Žiogas and Michał Eustachy Brensztejn (1874–1938), which were born out of their interest in the history of their country.

We have the impression that Kuprys-Kuprevičius collected ancient and modern coins, and that this part of the collection was vast and valuable; it contained coins from around the world. The collection also has a variety of old banknotes, medals, stamps, paintings, posters, ethnographic and archaeological artefacts, and

⁵ For example, he supported his nephew Jurgis Žilinskas (1885–1957), who was later known as an anatomy professor in Kaunas, and the head of the Anatomy Department at Vilnius University. The financial support from his uncle is described.

⁶ The Lithuanian litas was the national currency from 1922 to 1941, and from 1993 to January 2015.

⁷ In 1940, Jadvyga Žilinskaitė took the priest to court. She claimed that he had not paid her salary (ŠAM, GEK 1226, letter written by Kuprys-Kuprevičius to the local authorities).

other items (s.n. 1936b, p.62ff.; s.n. 1936a, 62ff.; s.n. 1944a, p.3; 1944a,b p.3; Lelis 1998, p.33). It should be noted that in 1944, the newspapers *Ateitis* and *Žemaičių žemė* called the collection ‘a small museum’ (s.n. 1944a, 1944b, p.3). According to doctor Lelis, the problem with it was that the owner kept information about each item in his memory, the items were not classified or described in written form, and he did not specify the find spot or the circumstances of their acquisition (Lelis 1998, p.34). In other words, it is difficult to identify the items in his collection.

The earliest knowledge about Kuprys-Kuprevičius’ hobby of collecting antiquities is found in his personal papers. In a letter (ŠAM, GEK 1226; the signature is unclear) dated 12 December 1927, the priest in the parish of Musninkai (Širvintos district) expressed his regret that he could not offer anything of value to the museum of the respected priest. It seems that Kuprys-Kuprevičius’ extended family also knew about his passion for antiquities. Vita Vileišienė, the daughter of his sister’s son, the anthropologist Professor Jurgis Žilinskas (1885–1957), and her husband P. Vileišis sent a letter (ŠAM, GEK 1226; letter dated 27 June 1937) to him, enthusiastically inviting him to Rome, where they were living, for at least two weeks, in order to see some archaeological excavations and masterpieces of Roman culture, and to extend his ‘archaeological horizons’. She implied that he could buy some old stuff ... and ‘enrich his collection’. Several newspaper cuttings found in his papers about research in Italy demonstrated the priest’s interest in Antiquity. It is unclear whether ‘Dear Uncle’ took advantage of the proposal from his relatives, but it shows that he had a chance to purchase artefacts on a market that he should have been familiar with.

We know very little about Kuprys-Kuprevičius’ archaeological collection. We do know that in 1933 (?), some of the finds from the dismantled Paalksniai barrow cemetery were acquired by him when he was the priest at Pašilė (Michelbertas 2011, p.7). When he was in Budriai in 1932–1934, and a little later in 1934–1940, when he lived in the Franciscan monastery in Kretinga, local people, sometimes as a payment for saying Mass, gave him artefacts from disappearing burial grounds in the Kretinga region, such as Užpelkiai (neck-rings, bracelets, spearheads), Ankštakiai (flat fibula), Kveciai (a spearhead), Raguviškiai II (bronze ornaments and spearheads),⁸ Lazdininkai (Roman coins and other finds), Kūlsodis (bronze bracelets and finger-rings), and the unknown site in Salantai (KM MA 1956 and

1959, corpus 4, files 5 and 7; KM MA 1940 corpus 1, file 314; Tebelškis 1998, p.224) (Fig. 1).

In 1938, the archaeologist Pranas Kulikauskas (1913–2004) visited the priest in Kretinga, in order to view the Žiogas collection, the value of which he estimated at 100,000 litas (Kulikauskas 2003, p.156). However, Kulikauskas did not mention anything about Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius’ personal collection. Unfortunately, the authors of this article could not find more data about the archaeological collection of the priest. Therefore, all the find spots and the composition of his archaeological collection remain unclear. The most disappointing fact is that, after reviewing short mentions in the press, it is clear that his valuable coin collection, including Roman coins found in coastal burial grounds, has been lost, or at best, its fate is unknown.

In 1936, the two collections of Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius and Fr Žiogas were exhibited, confirming their value (s.n. 1936a, 62ff.; s.n. 1944a, p.3). Balys Tarvydas (1897–1980) was one of the organisers of the exhibition. He worked at the time as an inspector in the Franciscan gymnasium in Kretinga, and was known as a member of the State Archaeological Commission. However, it is not true (see Samavičius 1994, p.4) that the collections of Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius and Fr Žiogas made up the greater part of the display of the Kretinga Museum, which opened on 12 July 1935. At that time, the Žiogas collection was still in Rudiškiai (Joniškis district). Later, Kuprys-Kuprevičius gave two stone-axe bore pegs, found in the Elerna parish (in Latvia), and a flint artefact, found near Gaidė, to the Kretinga Museum (KM MA 1938, corpus 2, file 3, Nos 814–816).

Between 1940 and 1947, the collection was in Akmenė, and then, apparently, in Žukančiai, the last place where Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius served as a priest. According to the 1943 correspondence between him and the Cultural Monuments Protection Agency, it is clear that from 1940 the agency tried to take over the sealed collection of Fr Žiogas, and the whole or partial collection (pictures) of Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius. However, the priest was allowed to remove the seals and to make an inventory of the collection (KPA 1943, fund 17, corpus 2, file 18, p.1–2). All previous documents written during the war have a note that he was to keep the collection until it was handed over to the museum (the Vytautas the Great Museum of Culture). It appears that he helped to preserve the collection as a whole during the postwar period, when valuable cultural artefacts were handed over to the Government for protection. On 12 October 1940, Lelis, who was a member of the Commission, stated that the Cultural Monuments Protection Agency had taken five boxes with archaeological finds into their

⁸ The priest went from Kretinga to the site and collected artefacts on the surface himself, besides the bronze ornaments and spearheads that were presented by the landowner.

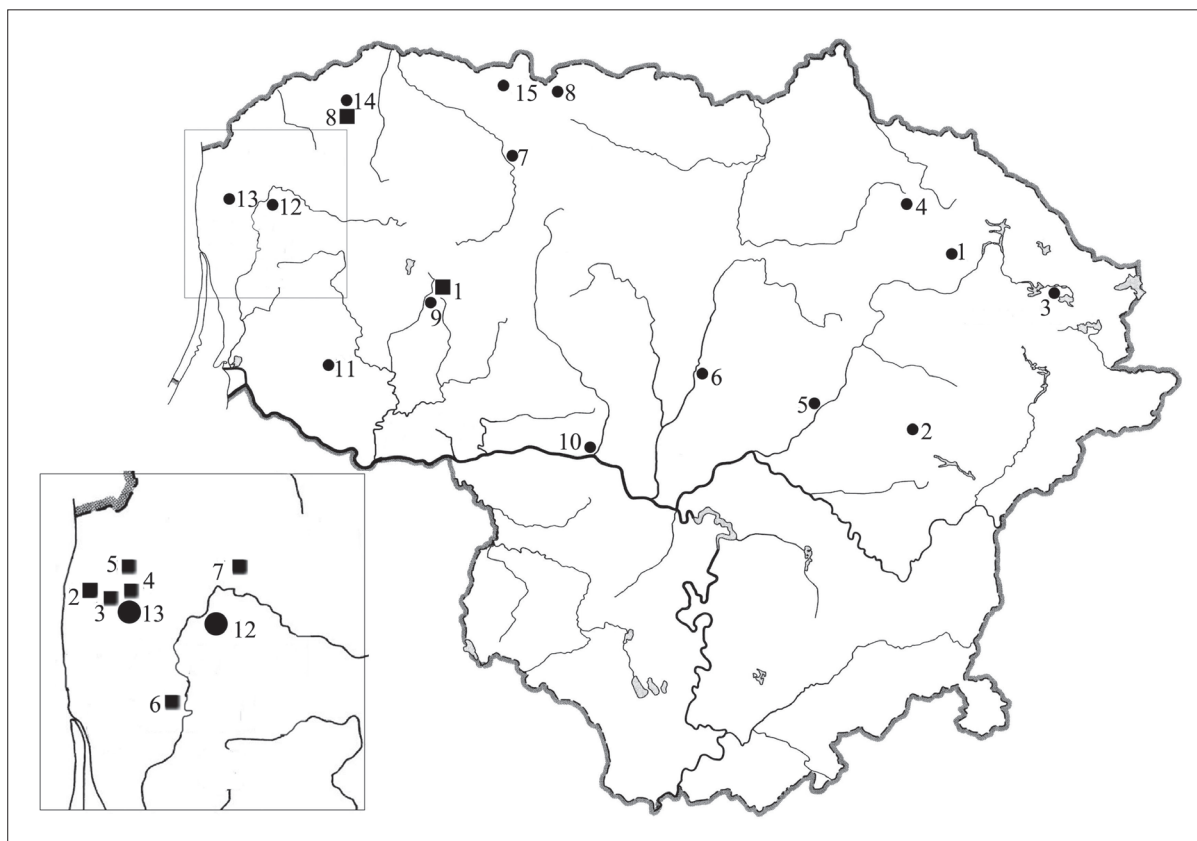


Fig. 1. Parishes where Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius served as priest (1874–1947) and some known find spots from where archaeological artefacts came into his collection.

● Parishes places: 1 Duokiškis (Rokiškis d.); 2 Pusnė (Molėtai d.); 3 Salakas (Zarasai d.); 4 Skapiškis (Kupiškis d.); 5 Deltuva (Ukmergė d.); 6 Šventybrastis (Kėdainiai d.); 7 Kuršėnai (Šiauliai d.); 8 Žukančiai (Joniškis d.); 9 Pašilė (Kelmė district); 10 Seredžius (Jurbarkas d.); 11 Vainutas (Šilutė d.); 12 Budriai (Kretinga d.); 13 Kretinga city; 14 Vaišaičiai (Skuodas d.); 15 Akmenė city.
■ Burial grounds: 1 Paalksniai (Kelmė d.); 2 Užpelkiai; 3 Ankštakiai; 4 Kveciai; 5 Lazdininkai (Kalnalaukis); 6 Raguviškiai; 7 Kūlsodis; 8 Salantai (nos. 2–8 in Kretinga district).

care (Fig. 2). Consequently, during the war the collection was in Akmenė, where it was put on show, and this is mentioned in wartime newspapers (s.n. 1944a, p.3; 1944b, p.3). Furthermore, it is quite clear that Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius showed his own collection of archaeological finds and his rich collection of numismatics to the public. It seems that Fr Žiogas' collection still remained packed up in boxes (s.n. 1944b, p.3).

Most importantly, the fate of Kuprys-Kuprevičius' collection in 1947 until his death is unclear. Today, there is not a single item which could be assigned without doubt to the collection. First of all, knowledge about the collection emerges in 1947, because it is not clear whether it remained in Žukančiai or Akmenė, or whether it came to Kaunas together with Kuprys-Kuprevičius. However, in a letter from the Kaunas Archdiocesan Curia to the Telšiai Diocesan Curia about the priest's death, there is a statement that the deceased left a valuable archaeological collection that

should be taken care of (Archive of Telšiai Diocesan Curia: letter No 303, 1947.03.20). Apparently, they had in mind the famous prewar Žiogas collection, and also Kuprys-Kuprevičius' collection. However, a large part of Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius' collection was lost in unexplained circumstances, or dispersed. Part of it may have ended up in the ŠAM, but more research is needed to relate finds to the Kuprys-Kuprevičius collection. Some archaeological items from it were probably mixed with Žiogas' collection. Fr Žiogas' notebook, with a set of inventory numbers and descriptions, was found in the ŠAM. The Žiogas collection in the ŠAM has more items than those mentioned in his notebook. It is therefore likely that the extra items could be part of Kuprys-Kuprevičius' collection. In 1959 and 1961, the ŠAM acquired Fr Žiogas' and Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius' collections, or the remaining parts of them, and also some of the personal papers of

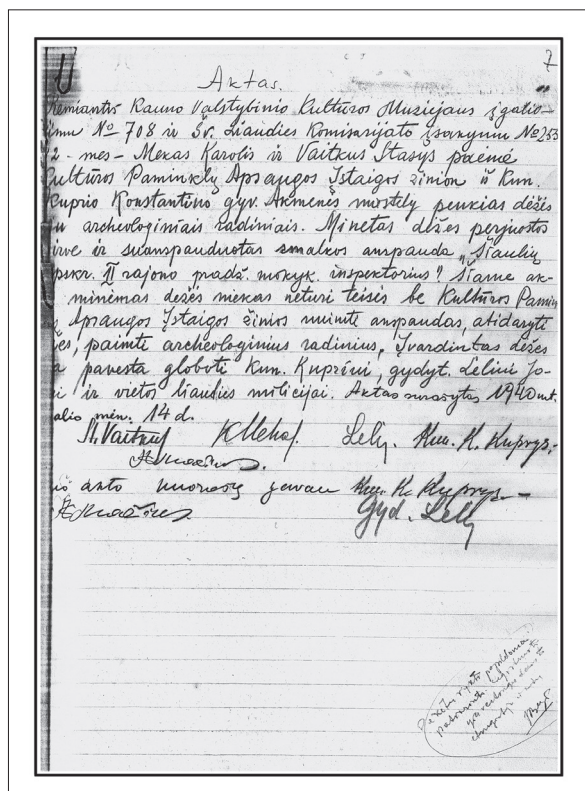


Fig. 2. An act according to which Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius, doctor Lelis and the local people's militia were obliged in 1940 to preserve five boxes with archaeological artefacts. The document sets out the general position of the collection: boxes with archaeological artefacts were taken under the protection of the Inspectorate of the Cultural Heritage (KPA, fund 17, corpus 2, file 18, p.7).

Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius.⁹ Therefore, it is possible that a small part of the priest's 'museum' (such as some medals) are in the ŠAM. However, future research is needed to separate the two collections.

Conclusions

The fate of Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius' collection in 1947 until his death is unclear. The size of his archaeological collection, the origins of the finds, and the composition of his collection remain unknown. It is likely that some of the archaeological items were mixed with the Žiogas collection. Some artefacts, judging from the known composition of the collection, are lost, and their fate is unknown.

⁹ The archaeological collection acquired by the ŠAM in 1959 from Stanislovas Pupaleigis (1887–1967), who was an emeritus in Papilė church, belongs to Fr Žiogas' collection (ŠAM 1959, exhibit acquisition act). However, it is not clear when and why the collection was moved from Akmenė or Žukančiai to Papilė (in the Akmenė district). It could be that some archaeological artefacts, medals and numismatics bought from J. Žilinskaitė in 1961 belonged to Fr Kuprys-Kuprevičius' collection (ŠAM 1961, exhibit acquisition act no. 6/161).

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Abbreviations

Elenchus omnium – Elenchus omnium ecclesiarum et universi cleri provinciae ecclesiasticae Lituaniae pro anno Domini.

Kaunas AK – Kauno arkivyskupijos kurija (Kaunas Archbishopric Curia)

LAD – Lietuvos archeologijos draugija (Society of Lithuanian Archaeology)

LIMIS – Lietuvos integrali muziejų informacinė sistema (Integral Information System of Lithuanian Museums)

Lietuvos katalikų dvasininkai – Lietuvos katalikų dvasininkai XVI–XXI amžiuje. Istorinė biogramų duomenų bazė.

KM MA – Kretingos muziejus, mokslinis archyvas (Kretinga Museum, Scientific Archive)

KPA – Kultūros paveldo departamento, prie Kultūros ministerijos. Kultūros paveldo centro archyvas (Department of the Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture. Archive of Cultural Heritage)

MM R – Lietuvos Nacionalinė Martyno Mažvydo biblioteka, Rankraštynas (Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, Department of Manuscripts)

ŠAM – Šiaulių „Aušros“ muziejus (Aušra Museum in Šiauliai)

d – district

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- KM MA – Kretingos muziejaus archeologijos ir numizmatikos inventorinė knyga 1936–1938, corpus 2, file 3, nos. 814–816.
- KM MA – Kretinga district archaeological sites descriptions compiled by J. Mickevičiaus in 1956 and 1959, corpus 4, files 5 and 7.
- KM MA – Kauno Vytauto Didžiojo Kultūros muziejaus konservatoriaus - preparatoriaus Prano Baleniūno žvalgomųjų archeologinių išvykų į Kretingos ir kitas apskritys 1940 m. komandiruočių ataskaitos (kopijos), corpus 1, file 314.
- KPA – Kultūros paminklų apsaugos įstaigos 1940–1943 dokumentai. In: Kultūros paveldo departamento, Kultūros paveldo centro archyvas, fund 17, corpus 2, file 18, 1–11.
- MM R – PRYŠMANTAS, Vladas collection In: MM R, fund 57: Valstybės archeologijos komisijos 1925–1937 m. protokolai, 1936–1937 m. veiklos apžvalga.
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PASLAPTINGA KUNIGO KONSTANTINO KUPRIO- KUPREVIČIAUS KOLEKCIJA

DONATAS BUTKUS, AUDRONĖ BLIUJENĖ

Santrauka

Apie kunigą ir kolekcininką Konstantiną Kuprį-Kuprevičių (1874–1947) ir jo paslaptinę kolekciją iš tiesų žinome labai nedaug. Kunigas nuo 1935 m. pateko į Valstybinės archeologinės komisijos ir, aišku, žiniasklaidos akiratį, kai įsigijo kunigo Juozapo Žiogas (1868–1935) archeologinę kolekciją. K. Kuprys-Kuprevičius nusipirko kolekciją 1935 m. prieš pat J. Žiogas mirtį šiandien nežinomomis aplinkybėmis. Aišku viena, kad kunigas J. Žiogas prieš tai savo kolekciją testamentu buvo paskyręs Kauno Vytauto Didžiojo kultūros muziejui. 1935 m. gruodžio 27 d. K. Kuprys-Kuprevičius įsigytą senienų kolekciją kartu su savo rinkiniais parodė parodoje Kretingoje, Šv. Antano Misijų kolegijoje. Nuo tada Lietuvos archeologų ir muziejininkų dėmesys, tiksliau – nesėkmingi bandymai perimti ar perpirkti J. Žiogas kolekciją, lydėjo K. Kuprį-Kuprevičių iki gyvenimo saulėlydžio. Todėl nieko keista, kad Lietuvos archeologijos istoriografijoje apie K. Kuprį-Kuprevičių įsitvirtino gana negatyvi

nuomonė. Šis straipsnis skirtas pamėginti bent kiek praskleisti uždangą nuo K. Kuprio-Kuprevičiaus gyvenimo kelio, jo filantropinės veiklos, aistringų įvairių senienų ir archeologinių radinių pomėgio ir jo kolekcijos, vadintos net „muziejumi“.

K. Kuprys-Kuprevičius kaip kolekcininkas priklauso tipiška kartai XIX a. pabaigos – XX a. pradžios senienų rinkėjų, kuriuos vedė kolekcionavimo aistra ir domino daugybė meno, mokslo ir kultūros sričių. Susidaro įspūdis, kad K. Kuprys-Kuprevičius rinko monetas nuo antikinių iki šiuolaikinių, ir ši kolekcijos dalis buvo gausi bei vertinga, į ją pakliuvo monetų „iš viso pasaulio“. Kolekcijoje taip pat buvo įvairių senų banknotų, medalių, pašto ženklų, paveikslų, plakatų, etnografinių dirbinių ir archeologinių radinių bei kitų eksponatų. Apie K. Kuprio-Kuprevičiaus archeologinį rinkinį žinome labai nedaug. Žinoma, kad apie 1933 (?) m. dalis radinių iš ardomų Paalksnių pilkapių pateko Pašilės klebonui K. Kupriui-Kuprevičiui. 1932–1934 m. gyvenant Budriuose, kiek vėliau Kretingos vienuolyne (1934–1940 m.), žmonės kunigui atidavė ar perdavė už pažadą atlaikyti mišias radinių iš ardomų Kretingos rajono kapinynų, tokių kaip Užpelkiai (antkaklė, apyrankės, ietigaliai), Ankštakiai (plokščia segė), Kveciai (ietigalis), Raguviškiai II (žalvariniai papuošalai ir ietigaliai) ir Lazdininkai (nemažai Romos monetų ir kitų radinių) bei iš nenustatyto paminklo Salantuose (1 pav.). Gaila, bet ir šio straipsnio autoriams daugiau duomenų, apibūdinančių kunigo archeologinę kolekcijos dalį, rasti nepavyko. Todėl lieka neaiškus ir jo archeologinės kolekcijos dydis, radinių kilmės vietos ir šios kolekcijos sudėtis. Labiausiai apmaudu, kad sprendžiant iš trumpučių žinučių spaudoje vertinga jo kolekcijos numizmatinė dalis, taip pat ir pajūrio kapinyuose rastosios Romos monetos, yra prarastos, geriausiu atveju jų likimas nežinomas. Tačiau dėl archyvinės medžiagos trūkumo ir paslaptin-gai išnykusios ar susimaišiusios su J. Žiogio rinkiniu K. Kuprio-Kuprevičiaus kolekcijos straipsnyje keliama klausimai toliau lieka neaiškūs.